



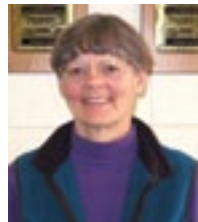
Wyoming soils, climate course helps real estate agents assist new landowners

Situation:

The number of people moving into northwest Wyoming is increasing. Many new landowners have little knowledge of land management in the high, cold desert of Wyoming. Horticultural techniques from other parts of the U.S. are rarely sustainable here. Environmental and social problems can arise when new landowners don't successfully manage their lands. Agricultural professionals are struggling to determine how to most effectively meet the educational needs of these new landowners.

Many new property owners and real estate professionals have not had prior relationships with the Cooperative Extension Service. New property owners were contacting the area educator about unfamiliar challenges they could not easily solve after purchasing land. Real estate agents have first contact with potential property owners and could provide information about Wyoming climate, soils, and plants if they had accurate information. The Northwest Area extension educator developed the six-hour elective class "Short Course: Wyoming Climate, Soil, and Plants" in 2008. She worked with the Wyoming Real Estate Commission and obtained accreditation for six elective continuing education credits for those completing the course. UW Extension publications were used with other resources to teach the course.

The course has been taught in Fremont, Hot Springs, Park, and Washakie counties the past four years with 58 real estate agents participating. An information sheet, "How to get courses approved by the Wyoming Real Estate Commission," was created to allow other educators to develop classes. An instructor's manual for the short course was created and presented to UW Extension Profitable and Sustainable Agriculture Systems initiative team members in May 2011.



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Impacts:

A follow-up survey was taken February 2011 of 38 real estate agents completing the course. Of the 17, or 45 percent, responding, 18 percent had described soil to clients, handed out soil test forms, or handed out water test forms.

- 24 percent answered client questions on plants or described Wyoming and local climates to clients.
- 29 percent gave *Barnyards & Backyards*, a UW Extension publication, to clients.
- 53 percent gave UW Extension publications to clients.
- 59 percent directed clients to other information sources or gave class handouts to clients.
- 18 percent of real estate agents found course information useful "seldom," 59 percent "sometimes," and 18 percent "often."
- 65 percent believe the course contributed to their professionalism.

Seven UW Extension educators in Uinta, Lincoln, Albany, Natrona, Sheridan, Crook, and Campbell counties are trained to present the course. The information was shared at the National Association of County Agricultural Agents at a refereed poster session.